

EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

WE are sick of the cant about blue-stocking women—as if a woman was any the worse for being intellectual! No one who understands the true position of the sex, and the influence that it exerts upon society, can join in this insane cry against the education of her who is destined to be a companion to ourselves and a mother to our children.

What is the true position of woman? Is she a slave or an equal? Is she a mere toy or a rational companion? Who will, at this day, deny her the possession of qualities, which, although somewhat different from those of the other sex, fit her in every respect to be his help-mate and adviser? The age of barbarism has past, and with it the notion that woman was fit only to be the slave of man. The more refined sensuality of the East, which regards her merely as a toy for the amusement of the stronger sex, finds no advocate in this enlightened epoch, amid a Christian people. Woman is now regarded as the equal, in every respect, of man—entitled to the same rights, fitted to share his anxieties, capable of being his confidant and adviser in all the business of life.

But although the equality of woman is admitted on all hands, it does not follow that her sphere is the same as that of man. The citizens of the same commonwealth all possess equal rights, but they do not all live by the same occupation, nor would it be for the good of the community that they should. So the two sexes have distinct duties to perform. Woman is destined for the quieter, man for the more noisy acts of life. The province of the one is to cheer our fireside, to educate our children, to regulate our household economy: the business of the other is to toil for the livelihood of those dear beings whom he has left at home, and to protect them against the thousand evils of the world. God has appointed to each a sphere, and bestowed on each peculiar qualities of mind and heart to fit them for their duty. The tenderness of soul, the patient endurance of suffering, the thousand graces of mind and manner which particularly distinguish the female sex are not more adapted to the sphere of woman as a wife and mother, than the clearer intellect, firmer resolve, and greater physical powers are to the sterner offices of life which the man is called on to fulfil. Each of these spheres has its peculiar rights as well as its peculiar duties, the *exclusive* enjoyment of which by no means derogates from the equality of the sexes. If it is improper for a husband to interfere with the sphere of his wife, so also is it unseemly for her to intrude on the province of the husband. It is no more the business of woman to lead our armies, to vote at the ballot-box, or to wrangle on a public rostrum, than it is for a man to darn

stockings, nurse children, or superintend a kitchen. When we claim for woman, therefore, the full benefits of education, we would have it borne in mind that she is to be educated consistently with the duties she will be called on to perform, and those duties, as we have already said, are to cheer our firesides, to educate our children, and to regulate our household economy.

But before we pass to these duties in detail, it will be necessary to advert to one fact which should always be remembered in the education of woman. She is destined to become the object of the love of the stronger sex, and those qualities which are to win that love, must appeal rather to the *taste* than to the *judgment*. It is an every day remark, in the experience of both sexes, that they *respect* such a person, but can never *love* him or her. And the reason is obvious—their intellect may be convinced, but their fancy is not subdued. Love, the holiest and purest passion of the heart is but another development of that longing for the beautiful, which is found in every soul, and which responds alike to a fine landscape, a melodious song, or a lovely countenance. We seek to gratify the thirst for the beautiful in the being of our love, decking her with attributes unseen to every eye but our own, and elevating her, through the aid of our imagination, into more than earthly loveliness. Some seek this ideal beauty in the countenance, others in the mind, others again in both united; but in whatever form we picture it to ourselves it is **THE BEAUTIFUL** for which we still aspire. It is, therefore, necessary, in the education of the softer sex, to bear this in mind; and thus the accomplishments, which some wholly despise, are not without their uses. This would be a sad world indeed if we were deprived of the admiration of the beautiful; and even our love would wither away if it did not daily find food for this admiration in some real or supposed quality in her we love.

Woman, therefore, should be educated with an eye to being, not only a useful, but a graceful and accomplished being. And these accomplishments should be regulated by this love for the beautiful. In dancing, the poetry of motion; in music, the poetry of sound; and in the other accomplishments which the sex study is to be found the secret by which so many of us are first fascinated, and always charmed. But accomplishments, it must still be remembered, are intended only to adorn the structure—and that however alluring they may be to a young lover, they form the least meritorious of the qualities which a wife should possess. They are not to be neglected, nor are they to be cultivated overmuch. At present they form the staple of a fashionable education. Can anything be more absurd? As if the sole object of a woman's life was to allure a beau—as if playing on the harp, or dancing with grace were to be the occupations of the wife.

It should not be so. The real duties which a woman will be called on to fulfil are, after all, those of the help-mate and the mother. To cheer our firesides by her smiles, by her little kindnesses, by the thousand graces of her manner is the part of a true wife, as well as to order the household economy and educate our children. But to do the latter, woman should herself be educated. She who is to teach the youthful mind its first lessons should be something more than a plaything, should possess a mind stored with the richest treasures of knowledge. It is almost incredible how many of our principles in later life, can be traced back to impressions received in childhood. Many an ignorant mother has laid the foundation of a child's unhappiness in adult age, by instilling into its mind false prejudices, or giving the character a wrong cast in early youth. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," is a saying full of truth; and we commend it to the serious consideration of every mother, of every true woman, of every teacher who is engaged in educating the young.

A woman should possess general information on every subject of daily life; but it is not necessary that she should be scientifically educated. The true relations of life are of more importance to her than mathematics, astronomy, or the dead languages. The ordering of a household should be taught to her in preference to conic sections, or the theory of the earth. The graces of mind and manner which endear her to her friends, are of more value to her than the abstrusest learning in chemistry, or the full comprehension of the controversy about the Greek *τε*. Yet, if after having acquired this knowledge, and adorned herself with these accomplishments, there should remain leisure to her, we do not object to her pursuing science in any or every department. But first, let her be taught those things which appertain to her sphere in society. How many are educated on this system? Alas! but few. Woman is now taught only those things which make her a pedant or a toy. We need a reform in female education. T.

